

# **AFFORDABLE, AGE-RESTRICTED HOUSING STUDY COMMITTEE**

## **MINUTES**

**January 29, 2008  
Newington Town Hall**

**1. Convene and Roll Call:**

Chairman Cohen announced a quorum was present at 7:05. Members in attendance were Mrs. Cohen, Mrs. Kornichuk, Mr. Nagel, and Mrs. Nasinnyk. Mr. Patel was absent. Also present were Ed Meehan, Town Planner, David Brown, New Samaritan Corporation and several residents from the Welles Drive neighborhood.

**2. Approval of December 17, 2007 Committee Minutes:**

Mr. Nagel moved the Minutes be approved, seconded by Mrs. Nasinnyk and approved. Mrs. Kornichuk abstained.

**3. Public Participation:**

Chairman Cohen invited members of the public the opportunity to comment.

- Jeff Zelek, 55 Welles Drive North urged the Committee that if the Town goes forward with leasing New Meadow property to the New Samaritan Corporation the Town Council should make sure all costs are covered and “get the best deal possible”.
- Mr. Johnson, Welles Drive requested that the Committee to evaluate the New Meadow site in light of responsible smart growth guidelines and consider that Newington has very little open space left. Mr. Johnson asked about the Town’s Plan of Conservation and Development’s recommendation for long range use of the New Meadow property.
- Michael Rosenkrantz, 38 Sunny Brook Drive, spoke as President of the Channel 14 Community Television and requested the Town to keep in mind the lead time necessary to relocate NCTV,
- Tom Bowen, 22 Woods Way, the Committee should consider that Plan of Development designations for additional senior housing at New Meadow Phase II may be out of date now, situations change over time. Town must be aware of Senior Center need for more parking and future expansion. Town Council could request the Assessor to review possible impacts on adjacent single family homes property value, if development is done right there should be no negative impacts.
- Chris LaBella, 73 Welles Drive North, Town should not try to solve a regional housing problem on such a small site. Newington’s low income seniors should get first priority for housing on Newington land. Other, larger housing options, such as the senior high rise in the Town Center, should be considered as a solution.

4. **Review of New Meadow Phase II Development Concepts:**

Mr. Meehan presented the master plan surveys that were approved in the early 1980's by the Town Council and TPZ allocating Parcel F 5.26 acres to the Housing Authority for the first phase of 26 apartments and Parcel E 2.36 acres for a second phase of senior apartments.

The first phase of Newington Housing Authority apartments opened for occupancy in March 1988. The "as built" plan shows a boundary line adjustment reducing the size of Parcel E to approximately 2.01 acres (subject to survey verification). In 1994-95 the Housing Authority commissioned plans to construct 36 apartments on Parcel E but the lack of State funds prevented the project to move forward. Mr. Meehan reported that both the 1984 and 1995 ten year plans of development designate the New Meadow property for senior housing.

Alternate designs have been discussed to move the proposed housing further north on the site onto the space now occupied by NCTV, 90 Welles Drive North. If this can be accomplished the south end of the property could be used for the additional parking needed by the Senior Center and Housing Authority. Welles Drive North would be permanently closed except emergency access. This design alternate will require extension of the Mill Street cul de sac and probably cross easements between the Housing Authority and New Samaritan Corporation for access and utilities. The Town staff has met with DECD representatives to discuss seeking a Small Cities grant to fund rehab improvements to the 26 Housing Authority apartments, parking lot construction for the Senior Center, Mill Street extension and the demolition of the NCTV building. Grant applications would be submitted to DECD in early summer 2008 and award announcement would be made in late fall 2008. This timeline is similar to the schedule that New Samaritan needs to follow for its HUD 202 application. If the Town is successful with getting a Small Cities grant then a design alternate to place the senior housing at the north end of the property could be feasible, if the Town is not awarded a grant then the original Parcel E site is still available. If the Town gets the Small Cities grant and New Samaritan does not get the HUD 202 award the Town could still go ahead with its project. The timeline for both the Small Cities grant and HUD 202 awards provide sufficient lead time for working with NCTV for relocation space.

5. **New Samaritan Corporation Site Alternatives and Project Schedule**

David Brown, Vice President for Real Estate Development, New Samaritan Corporation presented two (2) site plan concepts that could provide in one two story building 32 to 36 apartments. Mr. Brown reported that New Samaritan will work with the Town to construct either option. If the Small Cities grant is awarded New Samaritan is willing to go back to HUD and seek an adjustment in the project boundary. Mr. Brown expressed his opinion that moving the housing to the north side of the property is preferable but more complicated.

Mr. Brown reviewed the project process and timeline, Schedule C dated 1-23-08, attachment to proposed lease option. He noted this schedule provides that the

Town Council does not authorize the Town Manager to sign a ground lease with New Samaritan until after the Council accepts the project development plan, approves the 8-24 Referral and the TPZ approved the project site plan. This ground lease is also conditioned on HUD's firm funding commitment. (See attached Schedule C, January 23, 2008).

6. **Public Participation**

Chairman Cohen invited residents to again comment.

- Question about number of Newington residents that will actually live in these units. Mr. Brown stated that there can not be residency requirements or preference in selecting applicants. New Samaritan's experience has been that in some communities 80 percent of the senior housing tenants are from the host community.
- Question about project management of housing units. Mr. Brown stated that New Samaritan would set up a separate non profit 501 (c) corporation specifically for the New Meadow housing. HUD 202 program provides a capital advance to build, a 40 year mortgage and operating funds.

7. **Committee Discussion**

Mr. Nagel stated that the specific issues of site and building design were not the purview of this Committee. Such issues would be addressed later in the process once the Town Council identified their priority site for senior housing.

Mr. Nasinnyk noted that prior Committee members did an excellent job in evaluating the needs and potential locations for affordable senior housing. The New Meadow site seems to be the best location that is available now and moving the housing north on this parcel has many advantages.

Mrs. Kornichuk agreed with Mrs. Nasinnyk and stated that the option of locating the housing at the north side could result in a better design for all the neighbors. Mrs. Cohen stated that the needs of NCTV would not be ignored and should be coordinated with adequate lead time.

Mr. Nagel moved that the Affordable Age Restricted Housing Study Committee report to the Town Council the following findings:

**That** there exists in Newington a need for affordable housing to accommodate the growing number of elderly households;

**That** it is the Committee's opinion that the New Meadow property is the best and only available location for senior housing and its development furthers the Town's long standing commitment to use this land for affordable age restricted housing.

**That** a partnership with the New Samaritan .corporation is the best opportunity for meeting some of the Town's low income age restricted housing needs.

**Therefore,** the Committee recommends to the Council that the Town Manager be authorized to enter into a ground lease option with the New Samaritan Corporation. Seconded by Mrs. Nasinnyk and unanimously approved.

**8. Future Meeting Dates**

It was the consensus of the Committee to make its report to the Town Council and get Council direction before setting future meeting dates.

**9. Adjournment**

The Committee adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Submitted,

Edmund J. Meehan  
Town Planner

Attachment: Letter from Ann W. Garbiel, 32 Welles Drive North